

**Interview with Dr. Samuel E. Halpern, division medical officer of Destroyer Division 192, and present on board USS *Maddox* (DD-731) in August 1964 during the “Tonkin Gulf Incident.” Conducted by Jan K. Herman, Historian of the Navy Medical Department, 27 April 2004.**

**We are you from originally?**

I was born in the heart of bluegrass country in Georgetown, Kentucky. It's about 5 miles from Lexington. We sharecropped in that area. When I was 14 we bought our own farm up in northern Kentucky in a town called Burlington. I also went to high school there.

**When did you decide you wanted to be a doctor?**

I started at the University of Kentucky in physics. Then I decided that I wasn't smart enough to be a physicist so I switched to physiology my junior year. Then I decided to get a Ph.D. in physiology. You did that by going on to medical school for the first 2 years. Then you wrote your thesis and got a Ph.D. It was a quick way.

So I went to the University of Louisville for medical school and then at the end of my sophomore year I decided to get an MD-Ph.D. Then I decided that maybe instead of getting a Ph.D. now, I had better do an internship so I could always make a living if anything happened. When you've been a sharecropper for the first 14 years of your life, security means something.

So I did that and then the Vietnam War started heating up. It was obvious that there was going to be a huge doctor draft so I enlisted in the Navy.

**Was that in '63?**

July of '63.

**Where did you enlist?**

In Oklahoma City. I did my internship at the University of Oklahoma.

**What do you remember about leaving civilian life and becoming a naval officer?**

It was fabulous! As an intern, I was on 36 and off 12 for a year. I don't know if you've ever done anything like that. As a civilian intern, I was paid \$120 a month and they took two-thirds of it for taxes, food, and rent. I lived in the house staff quarters. An intern is treated like a dog. And that's if he's lucky. And you are the low end of the medical clan. When I went into the Navy, suddenly I was an officer and a gentleman by an act of Congress. People saluted me. And they stuck my pockets full of money. I just couldn't believe it.

**Did you go for orientation at Newport?**

No. My orientation was here in San Diego. I live in San Diego now. My papers said that I was supposed to meet DESDIV 192 in San Diego. I had no idea what DESDIV 192 meant. But I knew the date.

I was supposed to go to San Diego for orientation before going to Long Beach. So I came here and my orientation was given by a CAPT Sugarman. He was a physician who had been in about 25 years. He got me drunk for 3 days in San Diego and that was my orientation.

**That's a rather unique way of joining the Navy and learning the trade.**

That's what I figured.

**So you reported to DESDIV 192 at that point?**

Right. I went to Long Beach and DESDIV 192. There were four ships in my division, the *Berkeley* [DDG-15], which was a new DDG, the *Maddox* [DD-731], which was a 2,250-ton World War II destroyer. The *Picking* [DD-685], which was a 2,100-ton Fletcher Class destroyer, and then the *Herbert J. Thomas* [DD-833], that kept breaking down and I never met. It didn't go to WESTPAC with us.

**So you only had three ships in that division?**

That's correct. There were three ships that went to WESTPAC.

**And you were the division medical officer?**

Yes.

**A young division medical officer with little Navy experience. And suddenly you're thrust into quite a role.**

I didn't know anything at all when I went aboard. I didn't know how to salute. And when I walked aboard I just saluted everything in sight until finally I began to catch on as to what I was supposed to do.

**With the three ships in the division, did you have a choice as to which one you would be aboard?**

Yes. I could ride any one I wanted as long as I asked the commodore first.

**And you decided on the *Maddox*.**

I actually rode all three. How I came to be on the *Maddox* in the Tonkin Gulf was by orders. We were in port and I was told that the commodore wanted me to board the *Maddox* immediately. The staff ops officer told me that. So I boarded it immediately and nobody told me what I was going to do or where we were going. I was told to get the medical department in tiptop shape. So I had no idea what was going to happen when I went aboard.

**That was Commodore [John J.] Herrick?**

That's correct.

**With no experience in the Navy, you probably didn't even know what it meant to get the sick bay shipshape.**

No. But I had luck. In the Navy, on destroyers, you have what they call independent duty corpsmen. These are guys who have been in the Navy for a long time. They are highly trained. They are very good at their trade. They are easily as good as physician assistants and they also know the Navy. These guys would tell me what to do.

**This was one on the *Maddox* named Aguilar.**

Yes. Aguilar was the chief aboard the *Maddox*.

**Do you remember what his first name was?**

No. I always called him Chief.

**So he taught you the ropes but then you had the other independent duty corpsmen on the other two ships.**

The guy who was on the DDG was a super chief. That's the highest enlisted rank. He had been in for 30 years and was an extremely bright talented man. I learned a huge amount from him.

**What your impression of the *Maddox* when you went aboard?**

*Maddox* was a pretty scarred up old veteran, a 2,250-ton destroyer that had seen a lot of action during the Second World War. You could see the places where the kamikazes had hit the ship and where that damage had been repaired. Besides the punishment she had undergone then, *Maddox* had also fired a lot of shells in Korea.

As you went over the brow, slightly to the right, you saw a twin 5-inch 38 mount. You could go up the deck on either side or through the passageways from there. Aft were racks with depth charges and spaces with ammunition, and the loading gear for the 5-inch 38s. Along both sides of the ships were 3-inch guns and torpedo tubes. I think we had the Mark 44 torpedoes aboard then. As you went all the way forward you came upon Mount 51, and behind and above it was Mount 52. Both were twin 5-inch 38s.

The bridge was behind and above the second turret. The wardroom was forward and officers' country was amidships. All the way forward was chiefs' country. Crew's quarters was aft. CIC [combat information center] was in the middle of the ship.

The sick bay was about 5 feet by 4 feet. It had a cabinet containing all the pharmaceuticals--antibiotics, morphine, compazine and anything you might need. The nice thing about going to sea on a man of war was that everybody was young. If they weren't in good shape they wouldn't be there. So there wasn't a hell of a lot to do. The biggest thing I treated was gonorrhea and a case or two of syphilis or something like that, unless, of course, they happened to be an officer, and then they had a "non-specific urethritis."

**Could you describe the staffing of the medical departments on the three ships in the division? Take the *Maddox* for example. How many corpsmen did you have to help you out?**

One. Just Chief Aguilar, and one independent duty corpsman on each of the other two ships. They used to refer to these men as "Little Doc."

**In *Maddox*'s sick bay, did you have a table to work on?**

During combat, the wardroom table became your operating theater, and there were surgical lights above the table. We had all sorts of supplies stuffed beneath the divan in the wardroom with lots of IV fluids, injectable anesthetics, and ether. I know what you're thinking. Ether is explosive! I know it is but we needed some way of putting them to sleep. When you were hit aboard a man of war, you don't generally have just one casualty. We had some 260 people aboard the *Maddox* packed in an area some 300 feet long and about 30 feet in the beam. If there is combat, there would be a land office business. You were going to take care of people in the triage method. You stanch the hemorrhage and keep them alive as best you can until you can off-load them. And, of course, the crew hopes that the doctor and the corpsman are not dead. Both of us are in that wardroom so if we get wiped out, they are on their own.

**Was there any attempt, during you down time, to train the crew in first aid?**

They knew how to carry people to the wardroom. There was a whole division where crewmen were trained in damage control. They were trained to take care of that first and then how to move casualties from one part of the ship to another. You fixate a leg so that if it's broken it doesn't cut a major vessel. You try to move a man with a broken back or neck so that he's not going to end up a paraplegic. These people knew some but not a whole lot. They knew just enough to get them to us and that was it.

**As the division medical officer, you were probably responsible for over a thousand men.**

Yes, among the three ships.

**I'm leading up to the big event, obviously to the happenings of August 1964. When did you become aware of the fact that something was amiss?**

From the start, nobody told me a damn thing. They kept me in the total dark. I didn't know what was happening. I knew we were heading toward Taiwan. We pulled into Keelung and they brought some Marines aboard. They were led by a captain who was in charge of an eavesdropping device which was set up on the deck of the *Maddox*. There was a circle drawn around it and there were Marine guards. There was no question that if you got inside that circle, they would shoot you. These were mean-looking and very scary people.

Anyway, we pulled into Keelung and I still didn't know what was going on. I went to Taipai with a buddy of mine, Chief Bain. He was the after mount director. I think he's a lawyer somewhere in Chicago. He and I went to Taipai and had a good time. We came back and took off for what had to be Vietnam. I wasn't totally stupid as to what was going on. Those officers wouldn't tell me anything but I knew that the only thing in the direction we were going was Vietnam.

The first time I knew we were at war was one morning when I woke up real early. It was just at the crack of dawn. I went out on deck. I used to like doing that. The South China Sea has wonderful things to see in August. It's still cool at that hour. The waters are in the Doldrums. It's flat and you have magnificent sunrises and sunsets. I could see these specks off in the distance. And those specks were moving faster than anything I'd ever seen on water. There were three boats and I didn't know what the hell they were. I found out later they were PT boats. But I figured that nothing could move that fast unless it was a PT boat. And they were really hauling. I figured there had been some action. I found out later that there had just raided North Vietnamese facilities.

When we got up to join Task Force 77--the *Ticonderoga* [CV-14] and a lot of other ships. There were a lot of other ships in that task force. I learned that we were a DeSoto patrol. That's an intelligence patrol. But I didn't know what we were trying to become intelligent about.

After resupplying and refueling, we headed into the Gulf of Tonkin. We slowed down to about 5 knots, very, very slowly. At 5 knots you can go a hell of a long way on a tin can because you're hardly burning any fuel. It was hot. It was so hot! Unbelievable. We were surrounded by junks. Everywhere you looked there were junks, supposedly fishing vessels with nets out. We tried to avoid them but we had guns at the ready. I think we were at Condition 3. The next condition is General Quarters. At that time, and I could be wrong on this, half the guns are manned. We had 1 and 2 boilers on the line. A tin can of that age had four boilers. We were just kind of lazing along. Nothing really was happening.

The day of the first attack, I was lying in my bunk and we went to GQ. I wondered why but I knew something was happening even before we went to general quarters. If you have been aboard a destroyer for some time, you could listen and tell the speed of the ship, where the seas are coming from, how many boilers you had on line, the whole thing. And I was pretty good at deciphering what was going on down in the fire rooms.

We began picking up speed. The captain, Herb Osier, came on the IMC and said that we were being approached by North Vietnamese PT boats and we had information that they intended to engage us. And if they closed to 10,000 yards, we were going to fire warning shots. If they got closer than that, there would probably be an engagement, or something to that effect.

Before all this occurred, a Navy lieutenant kept running up and down and talking to the captain, Commodore Herrick, and the XO. It was obvious that there was a lot of stuff coming down. I went to my GQ station in the wardroom and Aguilar and I set up the hospital there as best we could. We got out some mattresses and threw them on the floor for casualties. We secured all the stuff that we could in case we took a hit, which was ridiculous because if we took a hit . . . The *Maddox* had the watertight integrity of a sieve. She was just an old rust bucket. Nevertheless, we were ready.

When we let go with the 5-inch 38 warning shots, I thought that was it. We were really speeding up and I could tell that we were bringing other boilers on line. The generators were whining like mad and we were doing somewhere between 25 and 28 knots. We could probably do about 31 knots in absolutely calm seas before we shook apart. And that would be with all four boilers on line.

All of a sudden I heard, "Torpedo in the water! Torpedo in the water!" The IMC was wide open. I thought, "This ain't real!" I didn't know anything about combat at sea. Aguilar kept yelling for me to get up and grab the overhead. There were these big I-beams. He wanted me to grab the overhead and get off the deck. I didn't understand why he wanted me to do that. He looked like an idiot to me grabbing those beams and lifting himself up on his tiptoes. I found out later why. If you're standing and the ship takes an explosion under you, it will break both your legs as the ship suddenly lifts up. I finally did what he said.

Our 5-inch mounts were just wide open--Boom! Boom! Boom! Boom! Boom! We were firing everything we could. And then I heard Crack! Crack! Crack! That was the sound of the 3-inch mounts. The 5-inch guns we used had a range of somewhere around 10,000 yards. The 3-inch guns have a range of about 6,000 yards. That meant that if we were opening with the 3-inch mounts they had to be within 6,000 yards of us and were going to be on us real quick. And we were throwing everything in the world at them. Some of the shells we fired were star shells. I know that because I saw the list of shells we fired from the magazines. A significant number of them were star shells! The only use these have is to light up the night. You're not going to hurt anything with a star shell unless the shell actually hits the target. And then I heard "Torpedo in the water! Torpedo in the water!" again followed by "Torpedo is past us." They were maneuvering the ship and the torpedoes were missing us.

I don't know how long the fight went on, not very long, and then the fight broke off. The planes from the *Ticonderoga* then came in and hit the PT boats. In that attack there were three PT boats. I was told we sunk one, one was dead in the water, and the other limped off. I don't know whether that's true but that was what I was told at the time.

**The *Maddox* hadn't taken any hits, had it?**

It had. We got hit by some .50 caliber stuff. They had 38mm, which didn't reach us, and .50 caliber, which did. One of them hit the after mount. Keith Bain was there and it dinged all over the place but didn't hit him. It bounced all around him in a confined, little space and it missed him. Anyway, we got out without any casualties.

**I understand you had to treat some ruptured eardrums from the shock of the 5-inch guns.**

They didn't get their cotton or whatever we used at that time, into their ears in time. If you are on deck and someone fires a 3-inch shell, it is absolutely painful. Your eardrums are splitting because it's a high-pitched crack. A 5-inch shell is more of a muffled baritone but a 3-inch shell is a tenor. Everybody that I examined that day who had a headache or an earache had blood behind the eardrum--both ears.

**I guess a lot of those people were up on the bridge, weren't they?**

No. These were the guys who were on the main deck who got damage to their ears.

**With the exception of the eardrum ruptures to deal with, you didn't have any other casualties from that first attack.**

No. Nobody got hit.

**But you knew you were in a war.**

Yes. I believed it by that time. Someone was trying to kill me and I knew that we had killed somebody.

**Then things tapered off for a while. Then wasn't the ship ordered back into action again about a day or so later?**

Yes. We left the Gulf of Tonkin and rendezvoused with Task Force 77. Then we were ordered back in. Accompanying us was the USS *Turner Joy* [DD-951], which was a younger destroyer than we were, but undoubtedly a less effective one. I was told, but I can't verify this, that the forward gun mounts wouldn't fire. It didn't seem reasonable to me that you'd go into combat with the forward gun mounts unable to fire but that's what I was told.

**Now that you were going back into the Tonkin Gulf again, just the *Maddox* and the *Turner Joy*.**

That's correct.

**You are now just waiting for something to happen, knowing that it's just a matter of time. Did you prepare the wardroom hospital to reflect this?**

I prepared for major casualties. I had all the stuff I could use to stop severe bleeding, to insert endotracheal tubes, to stop pain, IV fluids. I hung stuff so that if it sloshed around, it wouldn't be smashed. There's a real problem. That destroyer rolled 10 degrees from the vertical in port. And when you're at sea bogeying along, you're not only going to roll but pitch and yaw. If you're going to use an anesthetic, you can't use a spinal because it will creep on you and the guy will stop breathing. If it's a severe injury, you're going to have to use ether. If anybody sets off a spark, you're going to blow hell out of the ship and kill everybody--yourself and the patient too. And then we had xylocaine, which we could use. The best anesthetic was going to be

morphine. You hit a guy with 10mg of morphine IV, give him another 10mg IM [intramuscular] and he's going to calm down.

So we set up to triage as best we could. Aguilar and I had rehearsed this many times and we knew what we were doing. And then we just waited.

### **What was that waiting like for you?**

The worst part of combat was to be idle. And then during the attack, idleness is the worst thing that can possibly happen to you. You want to be doing something. You want to be watching the dial in the engine room. The best thing to be doing is firing a gun. You're going to slam those things in and just shoot hell out of them and this gives you a feeling of comfort. But when you've got nothing to do, that's like an execution. You keep waiting to die. Everything is out of your hands and somebody else is fighting your battle for you. You're not able to defend yourself.

### **How long did this waiting go on?**

The night attack was on the 4th of August. I guess 36 hours or something like that. I had gone to CIC earlier in the day and I saw things on the radar scope indicating that we were surrounded. Whether it was weather or not I couldn't tell. I was not a CIC officer. I didn't know what things really were. I wouldn't have known a hard target from a soft target. And weather will show up. But there were things everywhere and they seemed to be surrounding us when I was back there. I thought this didn't look too good, especially with the *Turner Joy* right behind us. We were scared to death of the *Turner Joy*. We didn't know how much combat experience the ship had. A misplaced 5-inch shell was not going to do an old tin can like ours very much good if it hit us amidships. In battle, you've got to know where everybody is. If you don't you are going to sink each other.

### **Was the *Turner Joy* in sight?**

Oh, yes. She was right in our wake. Time went on and then we started picking up speed and started zig zagging. It wasn't very long after that that we went to general quarters. The captain then said we were being attacked. I heard a 5-inch mount go off. I thought, "Okay, this is it." Then all of a sudden I heard, "Torpedo in the water! Torpedo in the water!" And that began the wildest damn time you have ever seen in your life.

We were zig zagging. We were firing. I could hear them talking on the bridge because the 1MC was open down in the wardroom. I heard the commodore say, "Shoot 'em. Shoot the sons of bitches!" I talked to Bain later and he kept saying that he would see a target and then it would disappear. He'd be fixed on it and ready to shoot and then it would vanish.

Meanwhile we were being thrown all over the place in rough waters on the blackest of damn nights you'd ever seen. The *Turner Joy* was opening up and it was scary. You'd keep hoping that somebody's not making a mistake. Anyway, we kept getting these torpedo sightings. The sonar man was listening for high-pitched screws and doing the best job he could. I'll guarantee it because his ass was on the line. He's not going to be court martialed; he's going to be dead if he's wrong. He kept hearing those sounds and he had an option. You could either call them what you think--a torpedo--or you could take a chance that it wasn't a torpedo and you were wrong. And I would have done the same thing the kid did, namely I would have told the bridge that there was a torpedo in the water.

So, we were zig zagging all over hell and every now and then we would open up with a one- or two-shot volley and I could hear the thud of the *Turner Joy* out there. This went on--the zig zagging and "Torpedo in the water!, Torpedo's missed us!"

Then the guys started piling in to the wardroom from the firerooms. We had set "Zebra" throughout the ship. That means you are locked down. And you've got all these boilers on the line in the fire rooms and it gets up to 140 degrees. So the casualties started coming in and I did exactly what I was supposed to do. I got them back into action as quickly as I could. I jammed IV fluids into them, wet them down, and got them back into the fire rooms. Of course, they came back after about 10 minutes. The second time they would be sicker and I'd do the same thing again and send them back. I hated to do it. The only time I decided not to send them back was when I thought they wouldn't survive the next time down. If I thought they'd die, I'd keep them.

People were lying all over the wardroom floor. I was stepping over people. I had some whose veins had collapsed. You tried to jam an 18-gauge needle into a collapsed vein. It was amazing! It really helps to have something to do in combat. And I was so damned busy. I'd hear these reports of torpedo in the water. I didn't give a damn. I had something to do. There wasn't anything I could do about the torpedo but I could do something about the guy lying there. And that's what I did. Those kids didn't realize that they did more for me than I did for them.

Eventually, Osier came on the 1MC and he said that he thought that the sounds the sonar man was picking up was the sound of our rudder as we moved through the water, and we were breaking off action. We slowed, and the *Turner Joy* slowed. Of course, everyone was waiting to see what would happen. We had slowed to about 20 knots. Finally, I got all the guys cleared out of the wardroom, and when we secured from GQ, I could not believe what I saw. All these officers came into the wardroom laughing hysterically. It was absolute pandemonium. It was one of the wildest scenes I had ever experienced. They didn't know what the hell it was but they had survived. Osier, Herrick, and some of the old chiefs had seen combat during the Second World War but the rest of us had never heard a shot fired in anger. Everybody was laughing, including me. I didn't realize I was laughing but suddenly I discovered that I was laughing too.

That ended the action. [VADM William] Bill Stockdale was our CAP [Combat Air Patrol] that night. A lone F-8. He was it. He was up there and kept looking for targets but couldn't find any. That's what he told me when we discussed the whole thing. There wasn't anything there that he could see. He maintains to this day that he never saw anything. The commodore later told me that perhaps three of these torpedoes were real. I don't know what Osier thought.

Anyway, we left the Gulf of Tonkin and rendezvoused with Task Force 77 and the next day the captain, the commodore, the XO, and Mr. Bueler got in the motor whaleboat and went over to the carrier. When they came back they were very somber. Something really big was happening. And they were wearing sidearms. It wasn't more than a few hours later that every officer was wearing a sidearm. And people were really grim. So, I asked for a sidearm and was refused. They said I was a noncombatant. I kept wondering whether they realized my situation. Maybe I was a noncombatant but not to the Vietnamese. We went back into the Gulf--The TJ and us.

### **Just the two of you?**

Yes. We started lolling around there and not going very fast. I kept waiting for something to happen. It was very tense. This Navy lieutenant kept running up to the bridge. He



was monitoring everything the Vietnamese said. We had broken their code. Late one night I was sleeping and the staff ops officer came in and shook me and said, "Doc, put your clothes on. The commodore wants to see you in his cabin." It was about 2 o'clock in the morning.

So I went up there and when I entered, the commodore looked awful. He was an interesting guy. Herrick was worried that this thing was going to spread into a giant Asian war. He smelled a rat as to what was going on. How much of the rat I never realized until I'd had time to reflect on what was going on. Herrick had a headache and I gave him something for it. He said, "Doc, I want you to get out all the morphine and distribute a syrette to every man. We're gonna get hit tomorrow." And that kind of got my attention.

Aguilar got out the morphine and we distributed a syrette to everybody. By this time I was a fatalist. I wanted a weapon. I felt that I had a right to defend myself. I did not want to become a prisoner of war. My family was slaughtered in Europe during the Second World War. We lost a whole bunch of people in the concentration camps and I just wasn't able to cope with the idea of dying that way. If I went in the water, I wasn't going to leave the Gulf alive. I knew that because I wasn't going to rot in prison camp.

As you know, after that second attack the president addressed Congress and asked for the Tonkin Gulf Resolution. Twenty years after the attack, Bob Shear of the *Los Angeles Times* interviewed me and told me the bullet that had hit the after mount director in the first attack was presented to Congress as having hit the ship during the night attack. And that would have been a profound lie. We told the truth. Anything that happened after that was done by the administration or the military. But I can tell you this. Anything that went off that ship that night and the next day was gospel. Nobody lied about anything. Whether or not there were ships out there that fired torpedoes at us, I don't. But I know that what was reported to the administration was the truth. And how they dressed up I don't know. I wasn't here to hear the president speak but I can tell you that that bullet did not come from the night attack. Nothing hit us during that night attack, nothing at all.

Anyway, we were sitting there waiting for the attack that was supposed to come. And waiting . . . and waiting . . . and waiting . . . and waiting . . . Then the staff ops officer came to me and said, "Relax, Doc. The attack's been called off." So I guess what happened was the Navy lieutenant operating the eavesdropping gear heard they weren't going to attack.

No more attacks occurred after that and we left the Gulf and rejoined Task Force 77. We then went back to Subic.

**Did you ever get the sidearm you requested?**

No, they never would give it to me. And I was a farm boy and a better shot than 90 percent of the guys out there.

**The rationale for the rest of the Vietnam War resulted from the Tonkin Gulf Resolution. As I understand it, they decided to base the resolution not on the first attack but on the second.**

That's what I understand.

**How much longer did you serve in that destroyer division?**

We took off shortly after that and came back to Long Beach and I was transferred to San Diego. I did the remainder of my time at the Coronado Annex of Balboa Hospital treating dependents. I left the Navy in July of '65.

**Did you go into private practice?**

No. I went back to the University of Oklahoma and did an internal medicine residency. Then I did a year of nuclear medicine. I was then with the VA in Los Angeles and did a year of radiochemistry. Then this job opened up at the University of California San Diego and I came here in August of 1970 and have been here ever since.

**So your specialty is nuclear medicine.**

Correct. I'm retired now but still work three days a week.

**And you live in San Diego?**

I live in Point Loma.

**I have one last question to ask you. These incidents in which you were involved aboard the *Maddox* took place 40 years ago. Do you ever think about what happened back then?**

After it happened, I used to have nightmares. I'd replay that whole damn thing in my head. Then I came back and there was all sorts of chaos here in the '60s and early '70s. When things abated, I quit thinking about it for a long while. And then a couple of years ago I began thinking about it again. I thought about all the guys who died. Here I was living and they were dead. I lived my life but they hadn't lived theirs. A lot of Vietnamese were dead. I don't know how many we killed in that attack during the day. I feel sorry for them. I know they were human beings. It's funny. Since then, Vietnam has developed relations with the United States. Guys fought each other in the jungle and killed one another. Their buddies had been killed. Vietnamese and their buddies had been killed. If I could bring back those guys we killed on the *Maddox* that day, I'd bring them back in a heartbeat.

I saw a picture of former enemies sitting down together and having a beer. At first I felt how wonderful it was that they were able to forgive. And then what came to mind was this awful waste. And why are human beings like this? I can understand how you might kill someone you hated but somebody that you don't know; I can't understand why you would kill them. War just seemed so completely obscene to me. Human beings seem to have a lethal gene. I think maybe we like war. Maybe we like the excitement. But then when you've been in it and you think back to the horrors of bodies blown apart, arms and legs blown off, people maimed for life, it's horrible.

I don't know. I can't figure out human beings. Other animals don't do it. We seem to be the only ones who do it. We have this great, big brain and it allows us to do all kinds of wonderful things and terribly malicious things. I really think that if we don't get ourselves together, this species is going to become extinct. There are 6 ½ billion of us on this planet and probably 50 percent go to bed hungry. Something's wrong with this picture. The name homo sapiens is wise animal. That's pretty damn arrogant for us to come up with that name. I'm not so sure that we're always so wise.

Don't get me wrong. I'm not a complete misanthrope. I think human beings are wonderful. But I think we have some major problems and we had better, by God, address them or we're going to be in deep shit.

**Well, you saw it first hand; you can speak with authority.**

I didn't get down in the mud with the grunts or get hit by a kamikaze like the *Maddox* did that time. I just got a little taste of it but what I got was enough to know that I don't want any more. But we send our kids out there. I understood Afghanistan and I know this guy in Iraq was a maniac. I'm aware of that. I never thought I would ever march against a war but I found that before this one I began marching against it. I just think we're going to have some way to solve these problems without blowing each other up. I'm not sure how we're going to do it but we better work like hell on it.

**I want to thank you for spending time with me this afternoon and sharing your thoughts.**

It was my pleasure, sir.